Approved For Release 2005/08/15 : CIA-RDP87B01034R000200070031-3 5828-78

NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD

NFIB-9.1/35
21 December 1978

3

MEMORANDUM FOR NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: Document Classification

1. With respect to the implementation of Executive Order 12065 on National Security Information, I would like to remind you of the President's words when he signed the Order on 28 June 1978. "While some material must be classified, the government classifies too much information, classifies it too highly, and for too long." These practices violate the public's right to know, impose unnecessary costs, and weaken protection for truly sensitive information by undermining respect for all classification.

2. The Community is currently reviewing its compartmentation programs. As we strive toward a new, simpler and more efficient system, one of our most urgent goals is to ensure that more information is published in collateral channels to make it more readily available to consumers. Compartmented systems are to be reserved solely for the protection of information or sources of highest sensitivity.

3. However, I want to ensure that we, as a Community, do not wait for a new system to be promulgated before we attack the root problem. I would remind you that the Executive Order requires that degrees of "identifiable" damage must be established before classifying material. This term was inserted to tighten standards for classification and to make classifiers' decisions more thoughtful and less automatic. Particularly in compartmented systems, there has been a tendency to classify materials at the Top Secret level almost by rote when, with a little thought, they could be issued either at a lower level and, in some cases, in collateral channels.

4. By a separate memorandum I am publishing guidance on what intelligence material qualifies for classification protection. I would anticipate that, in the preparation of specific classification guides, each Agency, Department and

Approved For Release 2005/08/15 : CIA-RDP87B01034R000200070031-3

Approved For Release 2005/08/15 : CIA-RDP87B01034R000200070031-3

Program Manager will critically analyze those categories of information to be classified and that classification levels and periods of classification protection will be reasonable and responsive to the public's right to know but still within the demands of our need to protect true secrets.

5. I intend to personally review classification patterns exercised within the Intelligence Community as we enter the implementation phase of Executive Order 12065. I expect all members of the Community to follow both the letter and spirit of the Order, not only because it expresses the desires of the President, but because it will enable us to do our job better.

STANSFIELD TURNER
Chairman

Approved For Release 2005/08/15 : CIA-RDP87B01034R000200070031-3